

**COUNTY SUPERVISORS, DISTRICT ATTORNEY & SHERIFF ATTEND
GRAND RE-OPENING OF DMHC
By Karen Zarsadiaz-Ige, Public Information Officer II**



On Monday, September 28, 2015, Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas (Second District) and the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) co-hosted the grand re-opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Downtown Mental Health Center (DMHC). Located at 529 S. Maple in Los Angeles, DMHC serves the residents of the Skid Row area.

At the dedication ceremony, Supervisor Hilda Solis (First District), District Attorney Jackie Lacey and Sheriff Jim McDonnell joined Supervisor Ridley-Thomas, LACDMH Director Marvin Southard, DSW, and LACDMH Chief Deputy Director Robin Kay, Ph.D.

“As a homeless person recovers, it’s important that they have access to services,” said Supervisor Ridley-Thomas. “The Downtown Mental Health Center acts as a lynchpin to services... Our job, our hope is to help them recover. The more they recover, the more we recover.”



“We are at Ground Zero. Nowhere in the County is it like this than here in Skid Row,” explained District Attorney Lacey. “This (DMHC) is an amazing accomplishment that ought to be acknowledged.”



Serving the Skid Row area, Downtown Mental Health Center completed a \$10 million renovation, financed through the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Capital Projects Fund. The new 25,000 square-foot center is designed to improve conditions and alleviate overcrowding. Using MHSA funding, LACDMH has implemented new programs in the Skid Row area to address the growing number of homeless persons with mental health needs. The much-needed renovation, which included demolition of the existing interiors, seismic upgrades of the structure, and replacement of the electrical, heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems, also includes redesigned space that will permit the hiring of additional outreach and treatment workers.

The newly built DMHC will retain Crisis Resolution and Wellness Services, and will now serve 3,000 clients through 75 staff. Other programs and services previously available at the main clinic will be provided at multiple sites throughout downtown to create greater service access to persons who need care.



“This place is an opportunity to work together to experiment and find ways to build community – and for people to get a fresh start,” stated Dr. Southard.